



Photos courtesy of Charlotte Huggins

Ash "Devine" Krauss, UNCA senior drama major and class clown, tends to a child in Haiti. Krauss hugs a patient in Guatemala, center. Danielle Chynoweth, right, poses in Peru with a patient and a bunny puppet.

Group clowns around to deliver alternative form of health care

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With the semester coming to a close, UNC Asheville is sending in the clowns, encouraging students and local residents to get active and spread some joy within the community this summer.

UNC Asheville's class clowns, the Geshundheit Institute and the School for Designing a Society will host a day of workshops aimed to generate ideas and think playfully on incorporating passions for community and creativity into careers and everyday lives, said Ash "Devine" Krauss, UNCA senior drama major and class clown.

"We can live our dreams, if we know how to," Krauss said. "This is a day dedicated to community building, networking and having fun. We want to explore the possibilities of creating jobs for ourselves and for enhancing our lives through the actualization of our desires."

Patch Adams, made famous by the 1998 Universal Studios film, founded the Geshundheit Institute. Officials said they aim to provide a positive global model of health care delivery.

"If I were a student in the month of April, I would be wondering what I was going to do this summer," said Danielle Chynoweth, 39, community organizer from the Urbana, Ill. society-design

school. "And, I would be worrying about how to support my dreams, while supporting my stomach, and paying basic bills."

Representing the School for Designing a Society, Chynoweth helps lead this weekend's discussions on a number of affordable projects UNCA students can engage in this summer.

"We will be discussing how to bridge work, as in one's life passion, and one's job," said Chynoweth, who taught at the school since 1995. "We will also talk about bridging school with life, and the campus with community organizing."

Campus clown Charlotte Huggins said the club wanted to help the campus-community bridge, and received \$500 to sponsor the event.

"We wanted to make it about social justice and fun," Huggins said. "The main idea is incorporating social justice into your life, however you want it."

Concerned with the American corporate job market, Huggins said she hopes to steer students toward keeping their belief systems while succeeding financially.

According to Huggins, the morning kicks off with Chynoweth's workshop on integrating community into the classroom and society design, followed by a panel discussion featuring community members, students and faculty. After lunch there will be an introduction to the Geshundheit Institute, and Huggins and Krauss will

finish the day with a hands-on clowning workshop.

Designing a New Health Care Model

"The Society for Designing a Society is an ongoing project in formulating the society we would like to live in," said Chynoweth, a former Urbana City Council member. "I became passionate about social transformation on the scale of a city, which is a great laboratory and learning space for democracy."

Motivated by her sense of how possible it is to live in a world where all human needs are met, Chynoweth said the fact that society does not yet meet this challenge, haunts her.

"We are well-versed in the problems of the world and in the world of criticism and complaint, but we lack the ability to describe the world we want to live in," she said. "The School for Designing a Society offers time, tools and company to formulate what we want. Every social change project has started from this premise—the vision of what we want."

The school helps seed social change projects throughout the world by providing a thoughtful, creative and challenging input to its largely international student body, Chynoweth said.

"This is about really coming to a clear and concise way to say what your goals

are, then link up with other people in order to achieve those goals," Huggins explained.

Chynoweth, a self-proclaimed social-change artist, said she first visited the Geshundheit Institute six years before *Patch Adams* debuted. She began to work closely with the Institute in 2004 and saw health care practitioners and students in health professions eager to change doctor and patient relationships.

"We, the teachers, saw that the ideas of the School for Designing a Society were needed in health care, which was in need of artists, designers and composers to help it get out of the terrible 'disease management' cycle it is in," Chynoweth said.

Clowning for a Cause

"The last workshop of the day is dedicated to humanitarian clowning—exploring living life joyfully and using joy as a tool for social activism," said graduating drama major Krauss.

Clowning is a way to combat what Patch Adams calls "global depression," Huggins said, which she described as loneliness and boredom, or your own personal sinkhole. It's an epidemic, she said, that affects rich and poor alike.

It is direct client care, Huggins said,